

REMARKS

Prior to entry of this amendment, Claims 1-32 were pending in this application, with Claims 1-12 and 24-32 withdrawn from consideration. By way of this amendment, Claims 1-17 and 24-32 are canceled. Hence, Claims 18-23 are presently pending in this application. Claim 18 is amended, pursuant to the Office Action's suggestion, to place the application in condition for allowance.

STATUS OF CLAIMS PRIOR TO THIS AMENDMENT

Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Wheeler et al. ("*Wheeler*"; U.S. Pat. No. 6,009,081). Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over *Wheeler*. Claims 15-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over *Wheeler* in view of Ecklund ("*Ecklund*"; U.S. Pat. No. 4,853,843).

Claims 18-23 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were considered allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations from the base claim and any intervening claims.

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

By this amendment, Claims 13-17 are canceled, as are the withdrawn Claims 1-12 and 24-32.

Claim 18 is amended, pursuant to the Office Action's suggestion, to independent form including all the limitations from Claim 13, from which it formerly depended. No new matter is introduced in the application by way of this amendment, and no additional search or consideration is required. Claims 19-23 still depend from Claim 18. Therefore,

Claims 18-23 are patentable over the references of record and withdrawal of the objection to these claims is kindly requested.

CONCLUSION

For at least the reasons indicated above, Applicants submit that all of the pending claims (18-23) present patentable subject matter over the references of record, and are in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner has questions regarding this case, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortages in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overages to Deposit Account No. 50-1302.

Respectfully Submitted,

HICKMAN PALERMO TRUONG &
BECKER LLP

Date: 7/14/04

John D. Henkhaus
John D. Henkhaus
Reg. No. 42,656

(408) 414-1080
Fax: (408) 414-1076
1600 Willow Street
San Jose, CA 95125-5106

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, Commissioner for Patents, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

on 7/14/2004 by Darci Sakamoto
Darci Sakamoto